

Remarks in Bangor, Maine November 4, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Bangor. Thank you, Maine. Thank you, John Bapst High School Band. The Basin Street All Women Dixieland Band, thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, here we are. I want to thank your mayor for welcoming me when I came here, my longtime friend Libby Mitchell for her work in our campaign. Thank you, Congressman John Baldacci, for being a great leader for Maine and a great Congressman for America. I can tell you that if everyone in Congress had the same attitude, values, and work habits as your Congressman does, we wouldn't have half the problems we've got in Washington, DC, today. And you should be very proud of him.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the first rally of the last day of the last campaign I will ever run, and I am glad to start it here with you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you. In the last few days I have been in much warmer weather—[laughter]—in Arizona and Nevada, southern California, El Paso, Las Cruces, New Mexico, San Antonio, Little Rock, New Orleans. I woke up this morning, believe it or not—or yesterday morning—in Tampa, Florida, and then I went to West Palm Beach and then I went to New Jersey and to Springfield, Massachusetts, and here we are.

I want you to know that I came here for three reasons. First, and in some ways most important, to say a simple thank you to the people of Maine for giving me a chance to serve as President, for taking a chance on me and giving me a chance to serve.

I owe so much to so many people here. And I would be remiss if I did not say a special word of thanks to my good friend Senator George Mitchell, who's not here tonight, because, as I'm sure all of you know, he played Senator Dole in our debates and he prepared me; he won every time. [Laughter] But because he prepared me so well, I think it worked out all right when the debates came along.

George Mitchell is now, as all of you know, working hard on the peace talks with Northern Ireland to try to continue the effort we have made to resolve the differences there between

the Irish Catholics and the Irish Protestants, between the loyalists and the unionists and the republics. We believe that we can see a peace in Ireland in our lifetime. And if it happens, everybody in Maine can take a lot of pride in knowing that George Mitchell played a pivotal, pivotal role. And I thank him for that.

The second reason I came here is because I wanted to stand one last time with my friend of many years, my former colleague as a Governor, a person I like, a person I admire, a person I earnestly hope you will elect to the United States Senate, Joe Brennan.

I got to thinking on the way up here that the people of Maine are as independent as the people of my home State of Arkansas are, and they're bound to think they have enough sense to choose their own Senator. And you don't need me to tell you how to vote. But I'll tell you this: I've known Joe Brennan for years and years. I've talked to him late at night when there were no cameras around, when there was no one to impress, no points to score, years ago when neither one of us could ever have foreseen that we might be standing here today. I know about his love for his children, his love for this State, his profound belief in education. I know how hard he has worked all of his life to uphold the highest standards in public service. I know and I can see it in his eyes tonight, bone weary from all this campaigning in this tight race, he still burns with a passion to serve you. And he will serve you well if you will give him a chance to do that.

And the third reason I came here tonight also relates to Joe, and that is to tell you that we're really very fortunate in this election we're going to have tomorrow, on Tuesday, because it's an election of enormous consequence with a very clear choice. And you really have to decide on the big choice. It's more important than the people involved and far more important than the political parties involved.

Once a generation or so, our country goes through such a period of profound change that we are powerless to stop the changes. And the only issue is whether we will respond to the changes in the appropriate way. Will we take advantage of this moment in history, to be able

to live in a way that will make us more prosperous, that will make us feel our lives have greater meaning because we'll be able to live more closely to the values we all say we believe in, that will enable us to move forward together?

You know, there are a lot of people here, I take it, from the University of Maine since you're not very far away. Let me just say to all of you, you know this, but the world you are about to enter is changing more rapidly in terms of the way people work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world than perhaps at any time certainly in modern history. It's been at least 100 years when we moved, basically, from farm to factory and from the country to the city, when America changed this much. And on top of that, we're not only moving to an economy suffused with technology in every way, we're becoming more and more involved in the rest of the world. And all of our patterns are being changed and a lot of challenges are out there.

I ran for President 4 years ago because I wanted to create opportunity for every American in this new world; because I wanted every American to be a responsible citizen in this new world and I didn't think we had to tolerate continually rising rates of crime and social division and family and community background, I thought we could do something about it; and because I wanted to see us come together instead of being divided as an American community. That is still the challenge today. That is the bridge I seek to build to the 21st century, one we can all walk across together.

But the great choice before you here tonight is very clear. It may be muddied up with the ads and the charges and all that, but I'm telling you, you can see from what has happened in Washington in the last 2 years, from the budget they passed that I vetoed that Governor Brennan's opponent supported, what the issue is. The issue is whether you believe that we're better off on our own or whether you believe we are better off if we work together to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives—not a guarantee but a chance to live up, every one of you, to your God-given potential. That's what I believe. That's what I believe.

And I just want to say a couple of things about it. First of all, it's not like you don't have any evidence. When I brought this approach to Washington and I said, "I'm tired of all that

political rhetoric and all that name-calling and liberal-this, conservative-that, Democrat, Republican," I said, "I'm tired of pointing fingers. I want us to work together to make this country a better place. And I'll work with anybody who will work with me." And I couldn't get a single, solitary soul on the other side to help us with our economic plan. They said, "Oh, it will bring the economy down." Well, now we know. Four years later we have 10.7 million new jobs and we have the lowest average inflation in 30 years, the lowest average unemployment in 20 years, the biggest drop in income inequality in 27 years in America. We're moving in the right direction, folks. Our approach is right, and they were not when they didn't support it.

I said we can lower the crime rate if we put 100,000 police on our street. We don't have to tolerate the crime rate going up year-in and year-out. We can mobilize citizens to work with the police officers and work in neighborhoods block by block. We even arranged to get 50,000 phones out there, cell phones for neighborhood watch groups to work with these police. I said we can do this. And they ridiculed me. They said, "Oh, you'll never put those police on the street." They must have believed it because they tried to stop me from doing it two or 3 times. But now we know. We've had 4 years of declining crime, the lowest crime rate in America in 10 years. If we do it for 4 more years everybody in America might start to feel safe again, and that would be a good thing for the children of this country.

I said I believe we can move people from welfare to work and still be good to their children. And we have reduced the welfare rolls by nearly 2 million and increased child support collections by almost 50 percent, \$4 billion a year, and given a tax credit for people who will adopt a child, which is a very good thing to do—\$5,000. I hope more children will find homes as a result of it.

And all this was different. But every step of the way it was more partisan than it should have been because they said no. And then they won the Congress in 1994, and we saw what they wanted to do.

Do you believe you're better off on your own, and is it all right if we're apart? Or do you believe we should help each other and grow and go forward together? That's what that budget fight was all about.

They said they were even going to give people like me a big tax cut though I didn't need it. And they were going to pay for it by cutting Medicare by 3 times as much as had to be cut to preserve the Medicare program. They were going to withdraw, after 30 years, the guarantee of the Medicaid program of health care to the elderly in nursing homes. They were even going to get rid of the standards for care in our nursing homes. They were going to withdraw the guarantee of health care to middle class families who have family members with disabilities. They were going to cut education, college loans, and Head Start for the first time in modern history and paralyze our ability to protect the environment.

Now, they said a lot of nice things about it and a lot of bad things about us personally. But that's the fact. That's what they were going to do. They were even going to raise taxes on 8 million of the hardest pressed working people in this country and allow corporate executives to raid their workers' pension funds after all that horrible experience we had in the 1980's. We certainly have learned that we have to protect pension funds. I've worked hard to do that.

And I said no. And then they cut the—shut the Government down. And I said no. So, they shut the Government down again. But because John Baldacci and others stood with me, they were not able to impose that budget on the American people. They said, "Oh, you can't bear to shut the Government down." And I said, "Shut the Government down. I'd rather see us inconvenienced for 30 days than damaged for 30 years." I'm glad we did that. But now you get to decide—you get to decide whether you believe that we'd be better off in Maine and Arkansas and other places in the country being cut loose or whether you think we ought to do some things together.

But let me tell you what this is not. This is not about liberal and conservative. Our administration has the most fiscally conservative record in modern history. We're the first administration to reduce the deficit in all 4 years of our term in the 20th century. It is now 63 percent lower than it was when we took office. Our Government is the smallest it's been since President Kennedy came here to campaign. Our record in abolishing regulations and unnecessary programs and privatizing programs exceeds that of my two Republican predecessors. It's not about

conservative or liberal, it's about whether we have an obligation to do some things together.

So you get to decide what we should do together. That's what this election for the Senate is about. Joe Brennan is a friend of mine and he's a good man and he'll serve you well. And I hope he gets elected. But the real reason you ought to vote for him is because it's better for you, your children, your future, the future of Maine, and the future of the United States of America. And you get to decide.

On the budget you've got a clear choice: You can follow our plan with 4 years of evidence and go on and balance the budget, give targeted tax cuts for education, childrearing, health care, and homebuying, and protect Medicare and Medicaid, education, and the environment or you can have this big old tax scheme which sounds good but actually raises taxes on 9 million hard-working people, requires bigger cuts in education than the ones I vetoed, and will blow a hole in the deficit and weaken our economy, but it'll cut us all loose. I say let's go forward together, build that bridge, and balance that budget. Will you help Joe Brennan and me to do that? *[Applause]* Will you do that? Come on, I can't hear you. *[Applause]*

Your vote will decide if we continue our efforts to help our families succeed at home and at work. I have been from corner to corner in this country, and everywhere I go—talking to families of all income levels—I find that the biggest challenge so many people face is how to fulfill their responsibilities at work and then do their most important job, which is to be good parents to their children. The average American working family is spending more hours on the job today than their predecessors were 25 years ago. Most parents work, and most parents have to work. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to design a society in which people can succeed at the most important work of all, being good parents, and also do very well at work. That is important.

That's why I fought for the family and medical leave law. The leaders of the other party fought against it. Now, they said—to be fair to them, they honestly believed it was wrong; Senator Dole believed it was wrong—they said, "It will hurt the economy because we ought to leave people alone and let them do whatever they want to do. And I hope they'll do the right thing." He wasn't mean about it; he hoped they would do it. I said, "If you want people

to be able to do it without getting hurt by their competitors who aren't doing it, you have to set some rules and let us all play by those rules."

Well, now we've got some evidence. Three years later we've got 12 million families who got to take some time off when their babies were born or their family members were sick. We've got record numbers of new businesses, record numbers of exports, and 10.7 million new jobs. Our approach is right; it will make America stronger. And we should expand family leave to help parents take time off to go see their children's teachers twice a year and take their family members to the doctor. Joe Brennan will help. Will you help? *[Applause]*

Your vote will decide whether we continue to try to help keep our children safe from drugs and tobacco and gangs and guns. We have tried to put people in every school in America saying drugs are wrong, drugs are illegal, drugs can kill you, with the safe and drug-free school program. They say they are tough on drugs, but they cut the program in half. And I stopped them, and we restored it. But we have more to do.

We were the first administration ever to say to the big tobacco companies, you have to stop marketing your cigarettes illegally to children. And they opposed me. They opposed me. But 3,000 kids a day start smoking; 1,000 will die earlier because of it. I think we did the right thing. We're in the middle of that. You will decide by your votes for the Senate and your vote for President whether you want us to continue the safe and drug-free schools program, the anti-teen-tobacco initiative, the initiatives that we're taking to put more police officers on the street, which they have consistently opposed and which they will have to undermine in their budget. It is your decision.

So this is not about Joe Brennan or Bill Clinton or John Baldacci. It's about what you want for your kids, your families, your communities, and your future. Will you help us on Tuesday to keep going in the right direction? *[Applause]*

And the most important thing of all, the most important thing of all is that everybody understand that even in this great State of Maine—which has the highest percentage of timberland of any State in the country, a State I have vacationed in and traveled across and come to love, a State like mine which still has a lot of agricultural and natural resource income—we will be

dominated by technology, by computers, by a global economy, by information. We will decide whether we shape it in a way that helps us to build strong families, good careers, and good futures or whether it shapes us in a way that undermines our hopes and dreams. We will decide. That is why the decision about how we will go about the business of educating the American people is perhaps the most fundamental decision before us in this election. Now, I have offered a program to the American people that will do many things. But I want you to think about three of them because they have particular relevance to Maine.

Number one, 40 percent of the 8-year-olds in this country still can't read independently by the time they get to the third grade. I have a plan to mobilize a million volunteers, including 100,000 college students we'll pay work-study funds to do it, to teach these children to read. Do you believe we should do that? *[Applause]* Will the students here help us do that? *[Applause]*

Number two, especially important to rural States like Maine and my home State of Arkansas, I have a plan to hook up every classroom and every library and every school in the entire United States of America to the information superhighway by the year 2000. Now, what this means—for all of you older folks like me out there that aren't computer whizzes, let me tell you what that means. It means that for the first time in the history of America kids in the smallest rural districts, kids in the poorest inner-city districts, rich kids, poor kids, middle class kids, city kids, rural kids, suburban kids, for the first time ever they'll all have access to the same information in the same way at the same time. It will revolutionize education in America. Will you help us to do it? *[Applause]* I can't hear you. Will you do it? *[Applause]*

Finally, we must open the doors of college education to all Americans of any age who are willing to go. I want to make 2 years of education after high school as universal as a high school diploma is today in the next 4 years. We can do that with no bureaucracy and no program simply by telling the American people they can deduct dollar for dollar from their tax bill the cost of a typical community college tuition for 2 years. I want to let you save in a IRA more than before, but withdraw from that retirement account without any penalty if you're using the money for education, medical emer-

gencies, buying a first-time home. And, finally, I want to give every American family a deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any college tuition. It will change the face of America. Now, believe me, that is our program. That is not their program. They cannot do that.

They can't fund our health care initiatives which is in our balanced budget to give families that are unemployed 6 months of insurance when they're between jobs, to give free mammograms to women on Medicare, to give respite care to the nearly 2 million families that are lovingly and courageously caring for family members with Alzheimer's, to add another million kids to the ranks of those with health insurance. They can't do that, either. It's not in their program because they have a "you're on your own" program: bigger cuts than the ones I vetoed, blowing a hole in the deficit, walking away from our common responsibilities.

You don't have to believe they're bad people. I don't like all this negative stuff about a lot of our campaigns. We just have different ideas.

You have to decide in Maine whether you believe we are right or they are right. And I'm telling you, you at least have some evidence, because compared to 4 years ago we're in better shape than we were then. But you know we've still got a lot of work to do to create opportunity for all Americans, to build a community in which we're all a part, to have responsible citizens everywhere and every community doing their part.

Will you help us on Tuesday to elect Joe Brennan? [Applause] Will you help us on Tuesday to build a bridge to the 21st century? [Applause] Will Maine lead the way into a bright new era, America's best days? [Applause] I need you. I can't hear you. Say it! [Applause]

Thank you. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 a.m. at the Bangor airport. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marshall Frankel of Bangor and State Representative Elizabeth (Libby) Mitchell.

Remarks in Manchester, New Hampshire November 4, 1996

The President. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you.

Audience member. Nice tie! [Laughter]

The President. Thank you. I sort of like this tie myself. Thank you. It was given to me just this morning. [Laughter]

A couple of weeks ago we were trying to plan how we would end this campaign—I hope I can say this without cracking up. [Laughter] And I said I would like to begin the last day of my last campaign in New Hampshire.

Five years and one month ago today I came to New Hampshire saying that the world was changing, America was changing, and that we couldn't stay with the old politics, that our country was being paralyzed by all this name-calling and rhetoric out of Washington, dividing us when we needed to be pulling together, and thinking about all the incredible opportunities as well as the stiff challenges we faced. And I believed that if we changed the nature of

politics in our Nation's Capital we could change America and we could come together and move forward, that we could create more opportunity and have more responsibility and we could come together in an American community. That's what I believed.

Four years ago, all over this State, all kinds of people took me on faith. You heard what Dick Swett said, we are better off than we were 4 years ago. We are moving in the right direction because of what he did. And a different kind of tone has overtaken the politics of New Hampshire. I was so happy and proud when I stood here on this stage this morning and I listened to Arnie and Joe and Dick and Jeanne Shaheen talk about what they wanted to do and why they were running and what they represented.

And I heard, I guess it was Joe who said Warren Rudman said that the Democrats had become the moderate party. I think the Democrats have become the modern party as well, the party of the future. America has always